

# Cooking in the Classroom

## Advantages of Cooking Experiences in the Classroom

*Cooking is motivational*—Cooking is an activity where children are allowed to do the same things that adults do. Cooking is also fun. Children have the opportunity to explore food and to create something good to eat.

*Cooking promotes social skills*—Children learn to cooperate, share, and practice good manners. Children have sense of pride and accomplishment by making and enjoying a finished product.

*Cooking crosses curriculum boundaries*

**Math**—measure, weigh, count, sort, use timers, and estimate ingredients; use one-to-one correspondence to give out foods and utensils; recognize shapes and sizes of foods; and use charts and graphs to keep track of favorites and varieties.

**Science**—Through cooking children observe, predict, experiment, investigate, and draw conclusions. Children observe the changes in food caused by cooking. Cooking also involves all of the senses. Healthy food habits can be emphasized by the types of food that are prepared in the classroom. Hand washing practices are naturally introduced during food preparation.

**Social Studies**—Children learn to work cooperatively when preparing food together and develop self-help skills when snacks are prepared independently. Children also have the chance to experience food from classmates' cultural backgrounds.

**Language**—Literacy skills are involved in “reading” recipe charts, dictating recipes and stories, sharing books about foods, learning sequence, and using language in describing ingredients and procedures. Fine motor skills are developed during the chopping, stirring and squeezing of food preparation.

**Creativity**—Children use creativity to combine ingredients, compare colors and shapes, and arrange food and table settings.

## Cooking Throughout the Classroom

Use food and food related props throughout the center areas in the classroom.

**Art**—cutters and rollers for clay, spatulas, cookie sheets. Have materials for food related collages.

**Dramatic Play**—Props such as pots and pans, baking sheets, utensils, empty food cartons and packages, aprons, recipe books, magazines with recipes, pictorial menus.

**Library**—Books related to foods and cooking.

**Music and Movement**—Songs and finger plays related to cooking

**Science**—Sensory experiences of smelling spices, observing changes in food, using measuring utensils

## **The Cooking Center**

If space permits, a cooking center may be added to the classroom. Include shelves for displaying supplies and appliances and a table for preparation. Hang items such as measuring cups, utensils, and potholders on a pegboard.

If the room does not have space for a permanent cooking center, a cooking cart to hold supplies can be used or a temporary area set up in the art area. Cooking supplies can be kept in a box and set up when needed.

## **Incorporating Cooking Activities into the Daily Routine**

Cooking activities can be used during small group time or as an independent activity. When using cooking as a small group activity, display a pictorial recipe on chart paper. Read the recipe chart together before beginning the activity. Redirect the children's attention to the chart during the preparation to emphasize the sequence of the activity. After completing cooking activity, display the recipe chart at eye level in the classroom.

To use cooking as an independent activity, recipe cards for each step of the process need to be prepared. Each step of the recipe should be illustrated on large index cards. The first card should have picture of washing hands. Keep each card simple and illustrate with picture cues (drawings of ingredients, spoons, cups). When a recipe calls for a spoon-full of ingredients, trace the appropriate-sized measuring spoon onto the card. Laminate the cards or cover with clear contact paper. The cards and necessary supplies are laid on the table in the proper sequence from left to right. The teacher should first demonstrate the process to the children, emphasizing the sequence and measuring techniques. After some initial assistance, children can move from card to card and complete the recipe independently.

## **Tips to Remember**

- When cooking in the classroom, remember to keep it simple and supervised.
- Emphasize the importance of washing hands before handling food.
- Use safety procedures when using appliances or sharp utensils.
- Make sure all ingredients and supplies are ready and organized prior to beginning the activity.
- Check for food allergies in children.

## **Ants in the Sand**

2 Graham crackers  
Chocolate sprinkles

Place graham crackers in a plastic sandwich bag and crush with a rolling pin. Add chocolate sprinkles to crushed crackers. Pour in bowl and eat with spoon or with fingers.

Variation: Add raisins (beetles), cinnamon candies, (ladybugs) or mini chocolate chips

### **Ants on a Raft**

Raisins  
Saltine or graham crackers  
Cheese spread, peanut butter or cream cheese

Put the spread you choose over the cracker.  
Place several raisins on top.

### **Ants on a Log**

Celery sticks  
Raisins  
Cheese spread, peanut butter or cream cheese

Wash celery; cut into 4" to 5" sticks. Spread the spread of choice inside the celery opening.  
Place several raisin "ants" on top.

### **Aquariums**

Blue gelatin powder  
Gummy fish

Prepare blue gelatin as directed. Pour into clear plastic glasses and refrigerate until partially set. Once partially set insert gummy fish into gelatin. Set until firm.

### **Fish in the River**

2 celery stalks  
¼ cup cream cheese (can be tinted with food coloring)  
8 Goldfish crackers

Trim and wash celery and fill with cheese. Top with crackers and serve.

### **Dirt in a Cup**

Chocolate pudding (instant)  
Chocolate wafer cookie crumbs  
Gummy worms

Prepare chocolate pudding mix as instructed on package. Fill plastic glasses ¾ full of pudding. Sprinkle cookie crumbs on pudding. Stick gummy worms in crumbs.

### **Banana Pudding**

Vanilla pudding (instant)  
Vanilla wafers  
Bananas

Prepare pudding according to shaker method. Children layer in a cup 1 vanilla wafer, 2 banana slices, spoon of pudding, another vanilla wafer, banana slices and top with pudding.

### **Jack-O'-Lantern**

Large round cookies  
White frosting  
Red and yellow food coloring  
Raisins

Give each child a small amount of frosting in a small paper cup or bowl. Add a few drops of yellow and red food coloring. Allow child to mix and see the change in color. Use the frosting to cover the round cookies. Make a face with the raisins.

### **Apple Smiles**

2 apple wedges (with skin on and seeds removed)  
Peanut butter  
Miniature marshmallows

Spread peanut butter on one side of an apple wedge. Place marshmallows on peanut butter. Spread peanut butter on the other apple wedge and place it over the marshmallows.

### **Teddy Bear Treats**

- 1 box graham crackers
- 3 crumbled chocolate bars
- 1 container whipped topping
- 1 box Teddy Grahams

Mix the crumbled chocolate with the whipped topping. To make one treat, spread the mixture on a graham cracker section; then place a few Teddy Grahams in the mixture so that they are standing up. Place the treats on a sheet of waxed paper and freeze for two hours.

### **Number Salad**

- 1 handful of toasted coconut
- 2 tablespoons orange juice concentrate
- 3 orange sections
- 4 apple slices
- 5 diced pieces of cheese
- 6 banana slices
- 7 small cubes melon
- 8 seedless grapes

Cut the fruit. Put each ingredient into a separate small dish or bowl. Count out the salad ingredients into one large bowl. Stir 9 times and 10, eat!

### **Peanut Honey Balls** (individual portion)

- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- ½ teaspoon honey
- 1 ½ teaspoon powdered milk
- Crushed cereal

Mix well. Roll into balls and roll in crushed cereal.

### **Instant Pudding** (individual portion)

- 2 tablespoons instant pudding mix
- 2 tablespoons powdered milk
- 1/3 cup water

Mix together and stir 2 minutes. Refrigerate.

### **Fruit Shake** (individual portion)

- 1 strawberry

- 1 slice banana
- 1 orange section
- ¼ cup pineapple juice
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 2 broken ice cubes

Put all ingredients in a blender. Blend briefly.

### **Lemonade** (individual portion)

- ½ lemon
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1/3 cup water

Squeeze lemon. Mix juice, sugar and water.

### **Apple Salad** (individual portion)

- ¼ apple, cut
- Celery, small piece, cut
- 5 raisins
- 1 teaspoon mayonnaise
- 1 walnut, broken

Add all ingredients to bowl or cup. Stir to mix.

### **Fruit Salad** (individual portion)

- ¼ apple, cut
- ¼ banana, cut
- ¼ pineapple, cut
- 2 orange sections, cut
- 1 walnut half, chopped

Mix and ingredients together. Stir well.

### **Peanut Butter Balls** (individual portion)

- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons marshmallow cream
- 3 vanilla wafers

Mix peanut butter and marshmallow cream together. Place vanilla wafers in a zip-lock bag and crush. Roll peanut butter mixture into a ball. Place ball in bag with vanilla wafer crumbs and shake.

### **Traffic Lights** (individual portion)

- 1 graham cracker
- Peanut butter
- Red, yellow and green candy coated candies

Break graham cracker into 4 sections. Spread with peanut butter. Place candies in peanut butter to resemble a traffic light.

### **Rainbow in a Cloud**

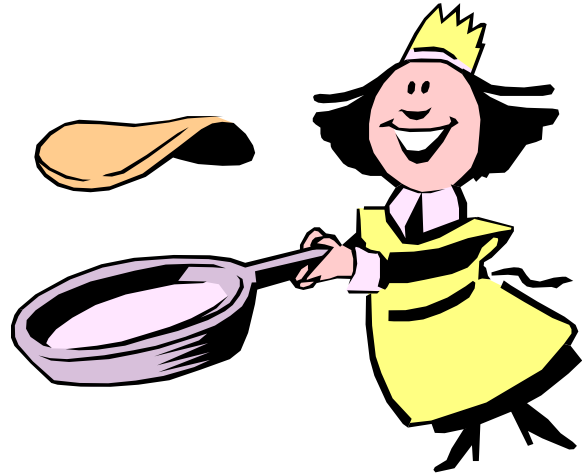
Whipped nondairy topping  
3 oz. box of red, yellow, orange, green and blue gelatin

Prepare each gelatin according to package directions. Cool until set. Scoop a spoon of whipped topping into a bowl. Add a spoonful of each color of gelatin.

### **Wreath Cookie**

1 butter cookie (use type with hole in middle)  
1 can white frosting  
Green food coloring  
Red cinnamon candies

Mix food coloring into frosting. Spread frosting on cookie. Add cinnamon candies.



### **Leprechaun Pudding**

2 tablespoons sugar free instant pistachio pudding  
½ cup milk

Place pudding mix and milk in a zip-lock plastic bag. Close bag. Squeeze and shake bag to mix.

### **Strawberry Surprise**

2 tablespoons strawberry yogurt  
2 whole strawberries  
1 teaspoon granola

Wash, hull and slice strawberries. Scoop yogurt into container, add strawberries, sprinkle with granola.

### **Graham Cracker Smash**

Graham cracker  
Applesauce

Place graham crackers in zip-lock bag. Push air out. Close bag and crush crackers. Spoon applesauce into small bowl or cup. Open bag and pour graham cracker bits over applesauce.

## Teacher Resource Books

Book	Author	Publisher
<u>Alphabet Cooking Cards</u>	Cherly Olmsted	Fearon Teacher Aids
<u>Book Cooks</u>		Creative Teaching Press
<u>Cook and Learn</u>	Beverly Veitch	Addison Wesley
<u>Cool Cooking for Kids</u>	Pat McClenahan	David S. Lake Publishers
<u>Cook and Learn</u>	Beverly Veitch	Addison Wesley
<u>Cup Cooking-Individual Child Portion</u>	Barbara Johnson	Early Educator's Press
<u>Food to Grow and Learn On</u>	Grace Bickert	Kid's Stuff
<u>Learning Through Play—Cooking</u>	Lisa Feeney	Scholastic
<u>Pretend Soup and Other Real Recipes</u>	Mollie Katzen	Tricycle Press
<u>Super Snacks</u>	Jean Warren	Warren Publishing
<u>Teaching Snacks</u>	Gayle Bittinger	Warren Publishing



Please refer to *Georgia's Pre-K Content Standards* for specific performance indicators.